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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 62nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF MR. NORMAN WILLIAMS

1. The CHAIRMAN, speaking on behalf of the Committee, and Mr. ABRASZEWSKI (Joint Inspection Unit) paid tribute to the memory of Mr. Norman Williams, late of the Joint Inspection Unit and a former representative of Panama on the Fifth Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 149: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PROTECTION FORCE (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.23

2. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands), Vice-Chairman, introduced draft resolution A/C.5/46/L.23 and recommended its adoption without a vote.

3. The draft resolution was adopted.

4. Mrs. EMERSON (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the twelve States members of the European Community, said that the Community fully supported the deployment of a United Nations peace-keeping force in Yugoslavia in accordance with the United Nations plan and with Security Council resolution 743 (1992). The Twelve hoped that the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) would be fully deployed by early April.

5. The Twelve had joined the consensus based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, but were conscious that the Secretary-General could revert to the General Assembly with revised estimates at any stage. It was of the utmost importance that the Yugoslav parties, for their part, should provide facilities and contributions in kind so as to minimize the cost of the operation, and that the United Nations Secretariat should work towards securing the most efficient and cost-effective operation.

6. Three elements were essential for the successful launching of peace-keeping operations: full and detailed consideration of the budgets by the General Assembly; a strengthening of the relevant Secretariat units, which had to deal with an increasing number of complex peace-keeping operations; and specific financing for the early stages of peace-keeping operations, since rapid deployment could be a crucial factor in such operations. The Twelve noted with deep concern that the average collection of payments in the first three months after assessment letters were issued was only 36 per cent.

7. That eight new peace-keeping operations had been established over the previous three years showed that such operations had taken on an indispensable role in the settlement of international disputes; the international community should be gratified that the enhanced prestige of the United Nations induced parties to conflicts to turn to the Organization for assistance. It was important to encourage the parties to a conflict to make prompt use of the

(Mrs. Emerson, Portugal)

existing machinery for dispute settlement, but it was Members' collective responsibility to see to it that the United Nations had the means to respond swiftly to the challenge of peace.

8. The cost of war in human and economic terms far outweighed the costs of peace, but the twelve States members of the European Community regretted that the financial situation of the United Nations remained precarious and were concerned that its capacity to carry out its mandated activities, including peace-keeping operations, was undermined by the continuing failure of some States to meet their financial obligations.

9. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) said that her delegation had early on called for United Nations involvement in the Yugoslav crisis and had worked in the Security Council to bring about the adoption of resolution 743 (1992). Austria hoped that UNPROFOR would be deployed without further delay and therefore fully supported the Secretary-General's efforts towards that end and his budget estimates for the operation. Regrettably, the General Assembly had not yet approved the entire amount proposed by the Secretary-General for UNPROFOR and so, for the first time, a peace-keeping operation was not endowed with the necessary resources to carry out its entire mandate. Her delegation hoped that at its forty-seventh session the General Assembly would provide the requisite financial security.

10. The increasing number of peace-keeping operations placed a heavy financial burden on the world community, but maintenance of international peace and security was one of the key goals of the United Nations, and it was still cheaper to preserve or establish peace than to resort to war.

11. Austria had noted with concern paragraph 32 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/46/893), which stated that on average only 36 per cent of appropriations were actually collected within three months after the assessments for peace-keeping operations were issued and that such payment did not allow the necessary reimbursement of troop-contributors. The maintenance of international peace and security was a collective responsibility of all Member States, which were called upon to fulfil their financial obligations.

12. Ms. MUSTONEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries (Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland), said that they remained firm supporters of United Nations peace-keeping activities, both politically and in terms of providing financial and personnel resources for their implementation. They welcomed the Security Council's decision to establish UNPROFOR as a contribution to an early, peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the crisis that had followed the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

13. The Nordic countries supported the Secretary-General's efforts in the Yugoslav crisis and his budget proposals for UNPROFOR. They reiterated their support for the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a peace-keeping reserve fund. The delegations of the Nordic countries had joined the consensus on the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the budget of the

(Ms. Mustonen, Finland)

Yugoslavia operation on the understanding that further consideration of the operation's financial requirements would take place at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, but that, should the need arise, the Secretary-General could request additional resources before that time. The expansion of the number of peace-keeping operations and their increasing complexity had automatically led to a substantial increase in the overall costs of the operations. That fact alone emphasized the importance of carrying out the operations in the most cost-effective manner possible. Peace-keeping operations had become an increasingly important tool in the United Nations efforts to bring about peaceful solutions to armed conflicts. It was crucial, however, that a sound financial basis for such operations should be established. Member States had to pay their contributions in full and on time and troop-contributing countries should be guaranteed that the United Nations would be able to reimburse them in an adequate and timely manner. As had been pointed out in paragraph 32 of the report of the Advisory Committee, such guarantees were not available when, on average, only 36 per cent of appropriations were actually collected within three months after Member States were notified of their assessments. In order to implement the Yugoslavia operation it was necessary for all Member States to honour their obligations.

14. Mrs. SHEAROUSE (United States of America) said that her delegation was pleased to have joined in the consensus on the draft resolution. It supported the peace-keeping operation and believed that it would make a significant contribution to peace in the region. However, her Government was concerned over the special scale of assessment for peace-keeping operations that had been in effect since 1973 and was carrying out a review of the matter.

15. Mr. RAE (India) said that, while his delegation supported the draft resolution, it wished to emphasize that paragraph 4 of document A/46/236/Add.1 notwithstanding, Article 17 of the Charter vested all budgetary authority in the General Assembly and that nothing in the draft resolution derogated from that Article.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.